ANNUAL REPORT
1987-88

Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Alberta Health & Social Services Disciplines Committee
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I. INTRODUCTION

This is the eleventh *Annual Report* of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. It describes the history, mandate, and structure of the Committee and gives an account of its activities during the period of April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988.

A. History of the Committee

In 1973, the Alberta Health Manpower Committee was established to coordinate manpower planning activities for the government's health services. The Committee was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development and its membership consisted of senior officials from that department as well as from the Departments of Labour and Manpower, Advanced Education, and the Alberta Hospital Services Commission.

In 1975, a reorganization of provincial government departments resulted in the formation of a new body. The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee was established by Ministerial Order in August 1976. The Chairman, representing the public, was appointed from outside government.

Subsequently, changes have been made to the Committee's make-up following various governmental reorganizations.

B. Mandate of the Committee

An adequate supply of appropriately trained personnel is essential to provide the needed health and social services. To ensure such manpower needs are met, adequate planning and research is required within government. The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee has been given the responsibility of coordinating the work in this area. More specifically, the Committee carries out the following functions:

- Advises government on major health and social service manpower training and related issues;
- Coordinates participating departments' planning and research activities for health and social service manpower;
- Collects relevant up-to-date manpower data for research purposes.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are found in Appendix A on page 11.

C. Structure and Membership of the Committee

As of March 31, 1988, the Committee had representation from five government departments: Advanced Education; Career Development and Employment; Community and Occupational Health; Hospitals and Medical Care; and Social Services. In addition, in June 1987, the representation from the Professions and Occupations Bureau was changed from observer status to participant.

The Committee reports to the Minister and Deputy Minister of each department; Dr. Ian C. Reid, Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations was lead Minister. Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A., served as Chairman.

The Committee is supported in its work by an Executive Secretary and the Secretariat which consists of research staff from the participating departments.

In addition, a group of individuals known as the manpower planning unit provides support services to the Committee. The unit is responsible for the ongoing collection of data through surveys or other methods, publication of annual documents, and other administrative and research functions. Previously based in the Department of Social Services, the manpower planning unit was transferred to the Professions and Occupations Bureau in June 1987.

A list of members of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and its Secretariat appears in Appendix B on page 12.

II. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MANPOWER POLICY

The primary responsibility of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is to advise the Minister and Deputy Minister of the participating departments on major human service manpower issues. This function has become increasingly important during the period of slow economic growth. Manpower demand is closely linked to economic conditions. Since 1987-88 was a year of budgetary restraint, it was necessary for the Committee to monitor the impact of monetary change on manpower requirements in the health and social service sector.

In addition to the effect of the economy, the Committee must be alert to other trends and the implications they have on manpower needs.

A. Planning Retreat

In order to focus attention on the Committee's broad responsibilities, a planning retreat for the Committee and its Secretariat was held in June 1987. A wide range of topics were examined and discussion centred on the effect of changes taking place in society which will impact on manpower requirements.

B. Submission to the Committee on Long Term Care for Senior Citizens

In April 1987, the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, The Honourable Marvin Moore, established a Committee on Long Term Care for Senior Citizens to advise on issues relating to care of the elderly. The six member committee was chaired by Mrs. Dianne Mirosh, M.L.A.

In July 1987, the Long Term Care Committee invited the Disciplines Committee to submit a brief and attend a meeting to discuss the issues relating to the number and types of manpower required to meet the future needs of the growing proportion of elderly Albertans. In response to this request, the Committee prepared a brief entitled "Long Term Care for Senior Citizens: Manpower Strategies."

In August 1987, Mr. Elvin Christenson, Chairman, and the present and former Executive Secretary appeared before the Long Term Care Committee to present the brief and answer questions.

C. Submission to the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans

In December 1987, Premier Don Getty announced the establishment of The Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. Under the Chairmanship of Louis D. Hyndman, the Commission's mandate encompasses reviewing all aspects of Alberta's health care system and recommending future directions to ensure the system continues to be of the highest calibre.

In February 1988, the Commission was asked to provide an Interim Report to address the concerns of nurses in the delivery of health care in Alberta's hospital and nursing home system.

The Commission requested submissions from interest groups and the general public. The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee responded in March 1988 with a written submission entitled "Profile of Nursing Education Programs and Nursing Employment Patterns."

D. Rehabilitation Therapy Manpower

In 1987-88, the Committee participated in a national study on Rehabilitation Therapy Manpower: physical therapists; occupational therapists; audiologists; and speech pathologists. This study was requested by the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health and was undertaken by the Federal/Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources.

E. Pharmacy Manpower

Shortages in pharmacy manpower has caused concern in Alberta and the rest of Canada. In 1987-88, the Disciplines Committee completed a study entitled "Pharmacy Manpower in Alberta: A Status Report."

F. Nursing Manpower Projections Model

Nursing manpower has been closely monitored by the Disciplines Committee since it constitutes the largest group of health care providers and plays a key role in the delivery of health care. In 1983, Advanced Education developed a nursing manpower model as a monitoring tool. This model is a computer-based program which provides projections on the number of nurses required over a period of time based on assumptions for supply and demand. In 1987, the nursing manpower model was transferred to the manpower planning unit within the Professions and Occupations Bureau.

The model required revision and updating. A private consultant was contracted to undertake this project. The study, which commenced in December 1987, was directed and reviewed by the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and a working group consisting of the Professions and Occupations Bureau representative and the Executive Secretary.

In carrying out this task, the Executive Secretary and the consultant interviewed individuals representative of the service sector, the professional association, educators, and government departments to obtain their input. The final report "Alberta Nursing Manpower Projections Report" was completed March 31, 1988. After the Committee approves the report, it will be available to interest groups.

G. Professional Legislation

Since regulation of the professions affects manpower, the Committee examined sections of the proposed Pharmaceutical Profession Act and provided comments regarding its effect on manpower requirements.

Besides the work on the Pharmaceutical Profession Act, the Committee's representatives on the Federal/Provincial Advisory Committee for Health Human Resources participated in a review of provincial legislation governing physicians, nurses, nursing assistants and psychiatric nurses. This study is ongoing.

H. Other Manpower Issues

In addition to addressing broad manpower issues and trends, undertaking studies on specific manpower groups, and responding to requests from other government bodies, the Disciplines Committee discussed specific issues as they arose during the year. These included the supply of dentists and dental hygienists, training programs for psychiatric nurses, and the effect of the Federal Day Care Program on manpower needs.

The Committee encouraged other government departments, the service sector and the educational sector to examine their own health and social service requirements. Data from its employer survey was shared with these groups in order to assist them in carrying out their specific research and planning activities.

III. PLANNING COORDINATION AND LIAISON

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee enables the participating departments to keep informed on developments which might affect manpower. The Committee met nine times during the 1987-88 period and the Secretariat met as required to follow through on various work projects. These exchanges allow the Committee to cooperate on research and planning activities.

In addition to consultation between departments, the Committee, generally through the work of the Secretariat, maintained contact with representatives of professional associations, post-secondary educational institutions and the service sector. Such cooperation is important since manpower issues are of concern to these groups as well.

Since manpower planning cannot be done in isolation, the Committee's Secretariat maintained membership on the Federal/ Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources. This intergovernmental body meets biannually and reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health. Its membership consists of representatives from the federal government, all provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The Committee undertakes studies on various manpower issues and provides a mechanism for a unified approach to address specific manpower problems. Working committees are generally established to coordinate the research for special studies. The meetings serve as a forum for participants to exchange information and keep up-to-date on developments in other provinces.

IV. COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MANPOWER DATA AND INFORMATION

In order to carry out the research activities of the Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee, a comprehensive and reliable database needs to be maintained. The Committee's mandate includes the development and upkeep of inventories on health and social service programs and the supply of manpower in this area. These inventories are maintained through various annual surveys conducted by the manpower planning unit and participating departments. Included in this work are surveys of employers and self employed professionals, post-secondary institutions, professional associations and licensing bodies. The Committee is grateful for the cooperation received from these groups and individuals and for the information they provide.

The data collected through these sources is not only used for specific studies but forms the basis of the Committee's annual manpower publications. In addition, it is used to answer questions from the survey participants and the public. The specific surveys and publications are described in the following section.

A. Survey of Professional Associations and Licensing Bodies

Data compiled by professional associations and licensing bodies are a valuable source of information for manpower planning purposes. Many professional groups are governed by provincial statutes and the responsibility for maintaining accurate registration data has been delegated to the professional associations. Registration for most of these groups is compulsory in order for professionals to practise or to use the professional titles or designations protected by the legislation. As a result, registration data is often a very reliable source of information. This survey has been conducted annually since 1978. It is carried out in December since this date corresponds to the end of the membership year for the majority of professional associations. In December 1987, 50 health and social service associations and licensing bodies were contacted by means of a mailed questionnaire. Information was requested on the number of members, the registration category, the number of active and practising members and their training, as well as the number of new registrants and their past training and registration. The response from this survey was excellent.

Although records kept by these associations are not standardized and information cannot be provided for all questions, associations are becoming more sophisticated in their data collection methods. As groups move towards computerization of membership data, this source of information may become even more important for manpower planning purposes.

B. Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee conducts an annual survey of employers and self employed professionals in the health and social service sector. These surveys have been ongoing since 1979 and are conducted on the 31st of March each year.

The survey consists of a mailed questionnaire which requests information on the number of health and social service practitioners employed full-time and part-time by occupational category. Data is also requested on the number of vacant positions and resignations in order to arrive at the vacancy rate and turnover rate. In addition, the questionnaire requests information on casual or contract employees and occupations for which employers are experiencing recruitment difficulties.

The survey is carried out by the manpower planning unit. The Departments of Hospitals and Medical Care and Advanced Education participate in this work.

In 1987, over 4600 employers were contacted of whom 98.7 percent responded. The survey provided information on 81 health and social service occupations. For certain groups such as ambulance personnel, child and youth care workers, registered nurses and social workers, additional information on the area of specialization or the educational level was also obtained.

C. Survey of Health and Social Service Education Programs

Alberta's post-secondary educational institutions are surveyed annually to obtain information on the health and social service training programs they offer. This survey is conducted through the Program Coordination Branch of the Department of Advanced Education.

Graduates from Alberta's training programs are the major source of health and social service manpower. As a result, it is important to obtain accurate data on the number of individuals enrolled and graduating from these programs in order to monitor potential supply. The survey obtains data on the number of applicants, the program quotas, the number of students enrolled by year, and the number of graduates each year. This data is compiled with comparisons over the past five years so that trends may be noted.

D. Employment Survey of Graduates of Post-Secondary Programs

In 1987, the Department of Career Development and Employment conducted its second survey of graduates of technical institutes and community colleges to obtain information on their employment six months after graduation. Two of these surveys have been carried out: one for 1985 graduates, the other for 1986.

The survey conducted in 1987 obtained information on those who completed studies in 1986. This information included employment after graduation as well as before studies commenced, the status and type of employment, job search

activities, starting salary, the enrollment of graduates in further post-secondary training, as well as demographic data. In all, about 8100 graduates from 111 program categories were contacted. Of these, 2053 graduates were from 30 different health and social service programs. Results of the survey are useful in determining demand in specific human service areas.

E. Publications

In addition to its *Annual Report*, the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee publishes a number of documents containing manpower and training information. These publications are distributed to government departments and nongovernmental agencies within and outside the province, educational institutions, professional associations and public libraries. Through this means, the Committee is able to share its manpower information and promote awareness and knowledge of human service manpower issues. The following is a list of publications circulated during the past year:

- *Health and Social Service Personnel Working in Alberta, March 31, 1987.*
- *Alberta Health and Social Service Education Programs Inventory, December 1987.*
- *Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1986.*

F. Information Requests

The manpower planning unit was responsible for responding to any information requests concerned with health and social service manpower. In carrying out this function the unit evaluates the information requirements of outside groups and the public, and plans improvements to its data collection base. The information provided is used by other government departments within and outside the province, non-governmental agencies, institutions, associations and the public for their own analysis or research studies.

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:
   (i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
   (ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.
2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social services manpower.
3. Review short and long range plans from appropriate agencies for:
   (i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
   (ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.
4. Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.
5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.
6. Advise from time to time on request the need for in-depth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.
7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.
8. Submit an Annual Report on the activities of the Committee.

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

(As of March 31, 1988)

Members of the Committee	Mr. Elvin A. Christenson, F.C.A., Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee
	Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education
	Mr. Don Ogaranko, Director, Labour Market Training Information Branch, Alberta Career Development and Employment
	Ms. Sharon Matthias, Executive Director, Management Support Services, Alberta Community and Occupational Health
	Mr. Don J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Development Division, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care
	Mr. Dennis Gartner, Executive Director, Alberta Professions and Occupations Bureau
	Ms. Diane McAmmond, Executive Director, Family Support Services, Alberta Social Services
Members of the Secretariat	Mrs. Frances Rawson, Executive Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee (Professions and Occupations Bureau)
	Mr. Bobby Seeber, Research Officer, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education
	Mr. Ralph Westwood, Assistant Director, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education
	Mr. Ian Montgomerie, Research Officer, Labour Market Training Information Branch, Alberta Career Development and Employment
	Mr. Michael Austin, Research Officer, Management Support Services, Alberta Community and Occupational Health
	Mrs. Brenda Johnson, Research Officer, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care
	Dr. Raymond W. Pong, Manager, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care
	Ms. Valerie Richmond, Director, Planning Support, Alberta Social Services

Alberta